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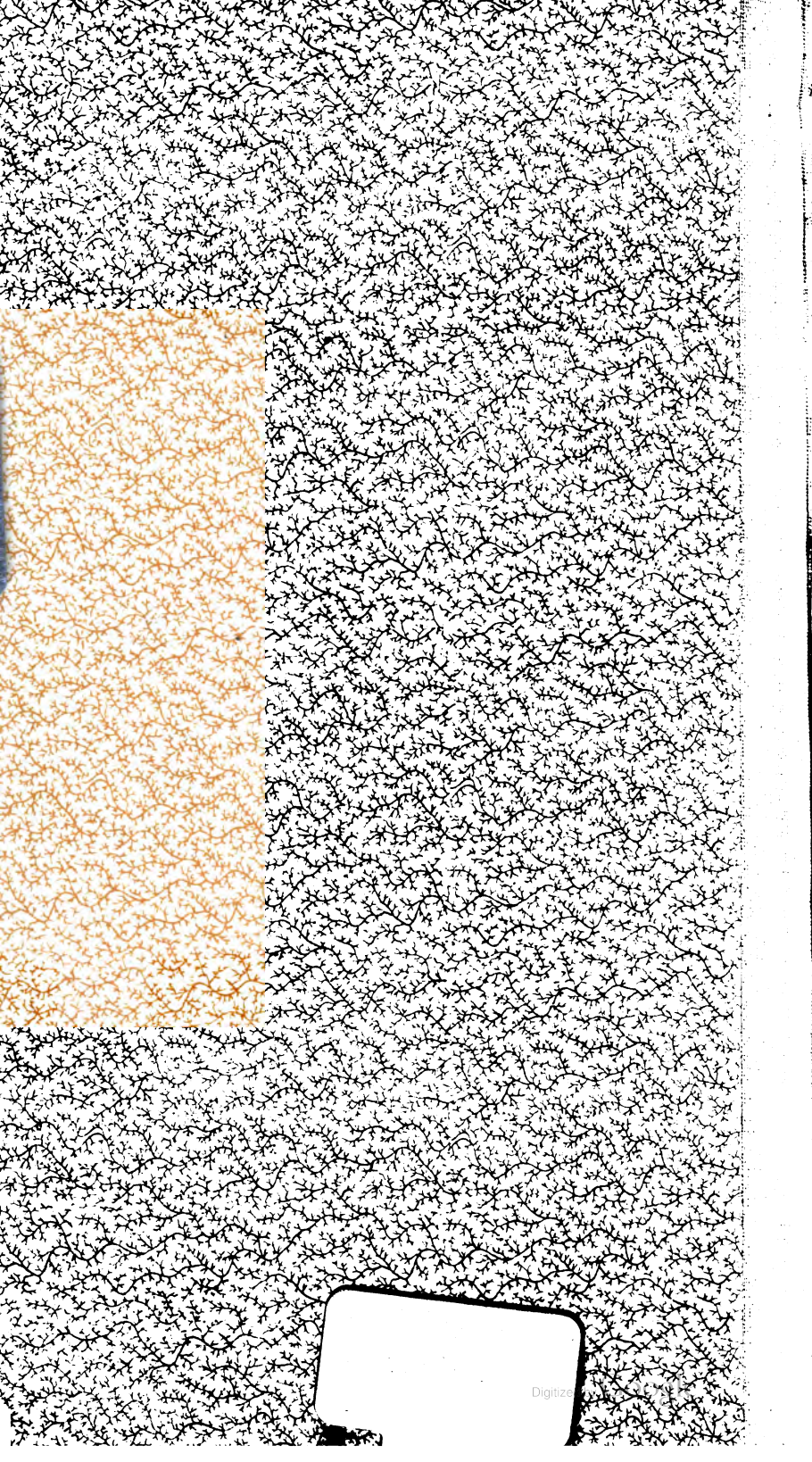
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IN THE FOURTH WEEK OF
OCTOBER 1795.

Wm Eden, 1st Baron Auckland

"Que faire encore une fois dans une telle nuit?"

"Attendre le jour."

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OCTOBER 24th, 1795.

IT is the purpose of the following pages to give a general view of the circumstances and interests of the French Revolution, and the French war, as they appear to me in the month of October 1795.

The attempt presents many discouragements at the outset; the objects are extensive, numerous, and complicated; they are, as yet, too near to us to be justly estimated, and in a course of varying movement, which baffles every attempt to place them in any precise and settled point of view.

The mind of every man has been fatigued by long agitations amidst these bewildered and unnatural scenes, and is brought with reluctance, pain, and loathing, to a new consideration of them.

I shall, nevertheless, try to state my ideas with candour and with plainness, in the order

in which they offer themselves. The same ideas have been separately discussed by many: the task, which I prescribe to myself, is to bring them together, and to lead them to certain conclusions.

If in the result, I can contribute either to a just appreciation of the great interests in question, or in any degree assist others more able to form such an appreciation, I shall think that my time and attention have been employed to good effect, both politically and morally.

§ 2. The people of France have been in a state of insurrection from the month of July, 1789, and in a state of war with foreign powers from the time of their decrees* of war

* Premier Decret. “ *Le roi de Hongrie & de Bohême a attenté à la souveraineté nationale, en déclarant vouloir soutenir la cause des princes possessionnés en Alsace, qui ont constamment refusé les indemnités qui leur ont été offertes,*” &c.

Second Decret. “ *L'Assemblée Nationale fidèle au serment qu'elle a fait de n'entreprendre aucune guerre dans l'esprit de conquête, ne prend les armes que pour le maintien de sa liberté,*” &c.

against the Emperor, and their invasion of the Austrian Netherlands, in April, 1792. This combined pressure of interior and exterior troubles has been aggravated by a suspension of commerce; a failure of manufactures, an interruption of agriculture, a great emigration, disbursements from the public treasure beyond any example among nations, large exportations of specie, and a dearth of the necessities of life. To these evils we may add the excesses of individuals and of factions struggling for the ascendancy, and a train of miseries resulting from anarchy, commotions, civil war, pillage, and massacres, with and without the colour of law.

The military and naval exertions, far from being broken by such a paroxysm, have been aided and maintained by it. The French armies, employed in the latter part of 1793 and in 1794, are said to have amounted to 800,000 men: in some reports of the Convention they were stated at 1,000,000; at this hour they cannot be estimated at less than 600,000.

It would be here unmanly not to speak of their military success in the terms which are due to it. Much of that success may in truth

be attributed to the overbearing force of numbers; but much was the result also of their own talents, activity, and perseverance. They have shewn to the world, that an undisciplined multitude, brought into the field partly through an enthusiasm of the popular mind, but more by the influence and urgency of famine, force, and terror, may learn, under self-taught generals, to defeat the best disciplined armies, headed by their sovereigns in person, and conducted by officers of the first abilities and experience. I enter not into other causes of their success; they would lead me into details to which history will render justice. The consequences are, that Europe has been overrun. The torrent of conquest and desolation is still rushing forwards; and those who direct the war profess not to suspend their efforts, till they shall have dictated a pacification, which (according to their decree passed a few days ago) is to unite to their empire, either in possession or in dependence, a great extension of territory, new barriers, many frontier places of strength, a large sea-coast, and several sea-ports.

§ 3. As far as military prowess can avail, France certainly has acquired good ground of self-confidence; and in this respect, her pretensions, gigantic as they are, do not at first sight appear extravagant.

But a nearer approach to those pretensions will place them in a different point of view; and it may even be doubted, whether the preponderance which France held through centuries in the scale of European powers will not eventually be destroyed by the effect of her present successes: or, at least, whether, so far as the political interests of Great Britain are concerned, she will remain an object of as much jealousy and alarm as she was under the late monarchy.

In saying this I am not seeking to conceal our embarrassments, or to palliate our disappointments; nor am I insensible to the unmerited fate and desolation of individuals and countries connected with us in the war: I am not disposed to under-rate a calamity subversive, for the present at least, of the balance of Europe, and which has threatened to demolish a system of civilization, under which my country enjoys a prosperity unparalleled in

the history of man. But after avowing the evil, I may be permitted, in the hour of retirement and reflexion, to examine the chances and means of emerging from it. If my speculations tend to inspire hopes beyond what the better opinion of others or future events may justify, it will not be from a desire to mislead, but from an error of judgment, arising from a disposition not to be disheartened by difficulties.

§ 4. Quitting therefore the vexatious spectacle of the conquests of France upon the continent, I now turn with some complacency to naval operations. In this branch of the war we relied almost entirely on ourselves; whilst the struggle on the continent was maintained on the one hand by numerous and united armies of the same country, and on the other by allies, whose supposed strength became their weakness, because it led them to miscalculate their means, and to make false combinations of measures and plans. In the conduct of the allied armies there was occasionally a want both of concert and confidence; their attention was sometimes distracted by

projects of advantage, foreign or adverse to the general cause ; and in the most pressing moments of the war, some of them shewed more sollicitude to embarrass each other, than to crush the common enemy.

It is notorious that the naval exertions of France were made on the same principles, which formed her armies. She sent to sea a force great beyond expectation. She sacrificed her own commerce to find the means of interrupting ours. She has since added to her advantages the neutrality of Spain, and the ports of Flanders and Holland, and the disposal of the Dutch navy. And yet I do not speak vauntingly when I assert, that, though she has occasionally found means to annoy our commerce, the extent and prosperity of which oblige us to have vessels passing and repassing in every part of the ocean, she has ceased to alarm us as a competitor for naval dominion. Her naval failure is decided. Time and history will best shew, what proportion of that failure is to be attributed to the want of subordination ; to the events at Toulon in 1793 ; to the most important and es-

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sential victory gained by the British fleet on the 1st of June, 1794; to other glorious actions in the different seas; to the unremitted exertions of our boards of admiralty; to the conduct of our officers; and the valour of our seamen. The losses on our part by capture amount to two ships of the line, one of which has been retaken, and two frigates and a few inferior vessels; and by different accidents four British ships of the line have been burnt or sunk. On the part of the enemy, the losses by capture and burning, and by the accidents of sea, amount to thirty-three ships of the line, and near an hundred frigates and inferior vessels of war. It appears that we have commissioned six ships of the line, which belonged to the enemy, and that three more are in readiness, and to be immediately commissioned. Every ship thus brought into service operates in a doubled proportion upon the comparative force of the two navies; and, accordingly, the total relative difference in favour of England, by captures, burning, and sinking, since the commencement of the war, may be estimated to be about thirty-six ships of the line, to which may be added, on

similar principles of calculation, a farther difference of near eighty frigates. France now hardly possesses a fleet that she can venture to send to sea; her scanty supply of necessaries from other countries depends on the casual arrivals of neutral vessels; she has abandoned her fisheries, the old and important object of our competition; her principal ports have been blockaded during several months; and our naval superiority is augmenting from day to day. I quit with reluctance this part of my subject, on which an English mind reposes with pleasure.

§ 5. In the predominancy of our navy we still possess the efficient and permanent cause of our prosperity. It is this consideration, which, notwithstanding the nullity of the present campaign in some parts of the continent, and its disastrous issue and circumstances in other parts, places us on higher ground for treating, than those on which we stood in any period of the last two years. It is our naval strength, which alone can give to us the means of restoring tranquillity to Europe. But in saying this, I do not mean to convey

any dissent from the occasional expediency of continental operations in war : I even doubt, whether the danger of invasion could have been averted, and whether the naval superiority, on which I am now relying, could have been established, if the attention of the enemy had not been powerfully diverted, during the first two years of the war, by our treaties and continental alliances, and by the brave, though unsuccessful, exertions of our armies on the continent.

§ 6. There is another point, in which our comparative situation is much improved, and by which the successes of France may suddenly lose all their importance and effect. I never persuaded myself that France would soon arrive at the end of her resources, or that the expences, which Great Britain was incurring, would be of no serious consequence to her. I have thought, however, that this war, like several modern wars, would become at last a struggle and question of finance. Here also I can look with complacency to the situation of our enemies. With them the supplies of the year are not equal to the expence of a

month; and the expence of a year is more than the whole amount of our national debt. Their *specie*, which in 1785 was estimated at eighty millions sterling, is nearly gone from the country, or is concealed. Their taxes are levied, and the exchanges of their interior trade are managed by the transfer and barter of the necessaries of life; a mode of existence ruinous to agriculture, and leading to every description of extortion and distress. The amount of the assignats, which have taken the place of the *specie*, is now said to be eighteen milliards, or seven hundred and twenty millions sterling; the consequent depreciation is in the proportion of seventy-five to one; and there remain no visible resources, but in extremes of violence no longer applicable to the spirit and temper of the people. It is utterly inexplicable how a government so circumstanced, and with fourteen armies to be paid, clothed, fed, and supplied, can find means to exist twenty-four hours.

From the first introduction of the system of assignats (founded in desperation and iniquity) it was easy to foresee the irretrievable ruin of the French finances, and the bankruptcy

of their public debt, which was then solemnly placed under the guaranty of French honour and French good faith; and it was a natural inference, that a failure of the assignats would produce a dissolution of the armies. They are now maintained by a scanty supply of specie, and by putting the physical resources and produce of the country into requisition: it is utterly impossible that this mode can be durable; and we have not heard that there is any other, to which it is possible to recur.

§ 7. It is not within my present plan to pursue the comparison to a statement of our own pecuniary means. I admit that, on our part, the drain upon the country for the expences of the war has been great; and, though the charge of continental armies, and of new levies on the continent is now much lessened, and will, I trust, undergo a total reduction, I do not suppose, if we continue to avoid the accumulation of unfunded debt, that the loan and taxes for the ensuing year will be much less than they were in the year 1795. But deploring, as I do, a course of events, which,

before the next two months shall have elapsed, will have rendered indispensable so large an addition to the permanent taxes, I nevertheless see good ground of consolation in the resources which have thus far enabled us to bear the pressure. And here it is well worthy of remark, that the wise and vigorous system for the reduction of the debt established in 1786, has had, during the war, an uninterrupted and increasing effect; and even that additions have been made for lessening the debt, and for accelerating the operation of compound interest. It is farther to be recollected, that the taxes imposed to pay the interest of the sums borrowed during the war include a provision of one per cent. for the gradual liquidation of the capital. It may be attributed chiefly to these salutary measures, that the price of the three per cents, which was 55 l. in January 1784, a period of peace, is 68 l. at this day (Oct. 24.) notwithstanding the war, and the great additions made, and making, to the capital of the debt.

§ 8. In looking forwards to the end of this conflict, it is some consolation to observe, that

all the evils which we have hitherto suffered by the war, are trivial in comparison of those with which we were menaced by the French, in the visitation of their revolutionary doctrines. The leaders of the French insurrection had, long before the war, conceived the project of rendering the danger general, in order to extricate themselves amidst the general confusion. In their language, "it was expedient" to set fire to every corner of Europe, and to "destroy all established governments, by an eruption of the volcanic principle of equality." To this policy we may attribute their declarations, that all other countries were unhappy, ignorant, superstitious, and enslaved; that "a great battle was to be fought between errors and principles;" and that it was "the morning of reason dawning upon the earth." Their declamatory doctrines made some progress; and they proceeded to issue to all nations their solemn grant of universal fraternity, which was promulgated in all languages with great activity and expence.

§ 9. At the epoch of the declaration of war against these kingdoms and Holland, the

people of the several governments of Europe, without exception, were in a dangerous state of ferment. This had not arisen entirely from the attraction of the new principles. The first successes of the French insurrection, a natural leaning to what was then thought to be the cause of liberty, the revolutions in the Belgic provinces and in Poland, and the total failure of the Austrian and Prussian campaign of 1792, followed by the successful invasion of Brabant, had, all together, excited the admiration of surrounding nations.

Every arrangement had been taken in the French ports and armies to commence hostilities at sea and on the continent, before it could be known in London or at the Hague that war was declared. The crisis was awful; and my imagination cannot fix bounds to the evils then impending, if the invasion of Holland * had met with the same success which,

* Dumouriez, in his Memoirs, and in his Letters to Pache and Miranda, affects to say, and others have repeated, that his success against Holland was prevented by the Austrian victories of the 1st and 3d of March. Those victories were glorious and important, and certainly confirm-

through the hostility of the elements, and through other causes, it obtained two years afterwards. The great successes of the Austrian, English, and Dutch forces, during the first six months of the war, and the wise and spirited measures adopted and pursued for the security and defence of the interior of these kingdoms, gave a salutary check to the contagion of anarchy.

§ 10. After the capture of Valenciennes the tide of war turned against us. But men's minds had already revolted against the crimes and sanguinary character of the French revolution. Every individual, who possessed any integrity, any benevolence, or any sense of religion, shuddered when the excesses of a populous and enlightened nation became such as would be hardly credible, if said to be com-

ed the security of Holland at that time; but the fact is, that before Dumouriez was ready to attempt the passage of the Moerdyck, the English guards were arrived, and the gun-boats were stationed; and from that hour (every possibility of frost being over) his expedition was at all events baffled.

mitted by armed savages in a state of intoxication and madness.

I turn from the recollection of those excesses, to dwell for a few moments on the impression which they have left. The triumphs of a criminal people had not so far dazzled the world, as to subdue that abhorrence of crimes, which a benevolent Creator hath implanted in the human mind. The eyes of men were now opened; and the notion of liberty, raised in the cradle of terror, amidst crowded camps and overflowing goals, was considered as a phantom, a deception, a monstrous dream in a delirium.

§. III. France will long serve as a beacon to other nations. The cruelties, which followed the seizure of ecclesiastical property, the avowal of infidelity and atheism, which seemed to serve as a pretext for robbing the churches, the profligacy of manners, encouraged by the new code of divorces, the requisitions against the farmers and shopkeepers, the law of the maximum, the forced loans, the compulsory enrolments, the domiciliary visits, the judicial massacres from prepared lists, were all admoni-

tions to other countries to look with revived attachment to their own governments, in the worst of which some protection was given to life, property, and the exercise of religion. To Englishmen the comparison presented new grounds of fair national pride ; it led them to contemplate and to cherish the whole system of their own civil and ecclesiastical establishment.

To all mankind one awful lesson will remain in the history of the leaders of the French insurrections, which, in the language of one of its principal leaders, is, " a recital of crimes " punished : " One set of miscreants rapidly succeeded another by a sort of hereditary succession, and every new administration murdered its predecessors. Thus it was that men, inveterate enemies of each other, were frequently brought together to the same scaffold, and at the same moment, with the innocent victims of their cruelty. Many have escaped public execution by the resource of suicide ; and others (whose moral punishment is perhaps the most severe) still survive.

§ 12. To those who meditate on the work-

ings of the human mind, a doubt may perhaps arise, whether the effects which I have described, though at present a salutary check to the dangerous spirit of innovation, may not hereafter prove favourable to abuses of power, by creating a timidity in the just cause of liberty.

I will hope, however, that if the season of peace should return, the misfortunes, which have been suffered by many, and the peril incurred by all, may produce a general softening of character, and a revision in mens minds of their social situations and duties.—Governments will have learnt not to precipitate themselves into embarrassments by speculative wars; Sovereigns and Princes will not forget, that steadiness, moderation, and public œconomy, are the best supports of the eminence on which they stand; Nobles and men of property will reflect, that their large allotment of worldly advantages is for the aid and benefit of the whole; and the labouring classes (for such there must be whilst men are men) will feel, that sober industry, protected by established government, is seldom without the benefits of competence and security.

§ 13. These truths seem to be finding their way into the bosoms of the French nation also ; “ their fraternity ” (as was lately stated to them in a solemn report) “ has been the brotherhood of Cain and Abel ; ” and “ they have organized nothing but bankruptcy and famine.”

Amidst the dispersion and destruction of their seminaries, libraries, and men of science, the humanizing effects of education have been suspended near six years ; and a large class of the people, in the most interesting time of life, has been reared in the dissoluteness of camps, and in the habits of violence and rapine. Still, however, that they are wearied with their agitations, we may infer from the ready acceptance of their new constitution. So far as can be foreseen, that constitution is the experiment of men disposed to try any thing to obtain repose ; and yet it affords small hope of a permanent resting place to the country. I admit that it contains many of the elements, which, when properly arranged, are known to form the best practical governments ; but the parts are strangely and anomalously combined : with one power to originate the laws ; with another

to accept or reject, but not to propose laws ; and with a third power, which (though it seems in some respects to hold the kingly office in commission) is neither to propose, nor to accept, nor to reject laws, but to be responsible for a fourth power, which is to be employed to execute. To this jealous sovereignty, of which the annual expence and mere civil list will be at least a million sterling, * are to be added the paraphernalia of royalty without the dignity, and also the distinctions of aristocracy, both in the parade of dress and in privileges, beyond any that existed under the proscribed monarchy : We may reasonably infer, that the taste for democracy is much changed ; and yet, to crown the whole, the occasional interference of the populace, under the name of primary assemblies, is added to this incoherent system.

§ 14. It was reserved for the eighteenth century to see a great and enlightened nation, in which All, who were not shedding tears, were rejoicing in the sufferings of others,

* This would be the amount in specie ; if paid in assignats, it would be seventy-five million sterling.

“ But what” (exclaimed Barrere, in adverting to one of the massacres) “ what is the present generation in comparison of the generations which are to come ?” It would be a waste of words to argue with men, who, by such phrases

“ Stop up th’ access and passage to remorse,
 “ That no compunctious visitings of nature
 “ Shake their fell purpose.”

Still, however, to this application of the detestable doctrine of expedient crimes, it may be answered, that in the eye of eternity the present generation is small indeed ; but to the faculties and duties of man it is every thing : if, by the best exercise of his powers, he can contribute to the improvement and happiness of the generation in which he lives, he may rest assured that he has no better means of promoting the improvement and happiness of the generations which are to come.

§ 15. Every discussion respecting this eventful period derives, from the multiplicity and magnitude of its objects, a tone of declamation, which it is desirable to avoid. An in-

terruption has certainly been given to the progress of arts, of science, and of letters; in return, scenes have been exhibited, which will for ages employ the painter, the moralist, the poet, and the historian.

§ 16. The French insurrection, considered distinct and separate from its crimes, exhibits a mixture of impiety, levities, and pedantry. A pantheon for the remains of Voltaire, Rousseau, Mirabeau, and Marat! All religion superseded by the goddess Reason, and this new divinity exhibited to the assembly of the nation in the person of a prostitute upon a pedestal! The chaunting of civic hymns by the legislators in chorus with fish-women! The fraternity decreed to the public executioner! The affected use of the word citizen*, and the adoption of the classical forms of address! The red caps, the civic feasts, the objects assigned to the festivals, and

* In recapitulating the pedantries, I ought not to forget the new phraseology (*le Néologisme de la Révolution.*). A catalogue of the new coined words would be curious; they were often characteristic of the speakers and actors,

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to the five complementary days of the calendar! All these "fantastic tricks before high Heaven" escape our indignation amidst the ridicule which they excite. We might forgive a nation for suffering itself to be persuaded that liberty consists in singularities; but the singularities are so blended with atrocities, that it becomes painful on reflexion to have smiled at them. These extravagancies, however, have had their use; they have helped to eradicate from the minds of surrounding nations the admiration, which they were disposed to feel for the French insurrection.

§ 17. Still, however, we must recur to the impression made by the continental successes, to the avowed pretensions of aggrandizement, and of the progress through confusion to crimes. For example—"Nationaliser, fayettiser, fédéraliser, démocratiser, démoraliser, municipaliser, lanterner, volcaniser, septembriser, guillotiner, décatoliser, fraterniser, désocialiser, desorganiser, féociser, sansculottiser, panthéoniser : — et les substantifs ; Centralité, Civilisme, Sansculottisme, Terrorisme, Républicanisme, Lezenation, Burocratie, Démonétisation, Baignade, Noyade, Fusillade, Rolandiste, Démocrate, Désorganisatueur, Robespierreiste, Ultra-évolutionnaire, Terroriste, Septembriseur, Sansculottiste, &c. &c. &c."

and to the apparent power of the French armies to enforce those pretensions ; a due regard must be given to those objects, in considering what is next to be done, even if we should persuade ourselves that the doctrines and details of the French revolution are beginning to be seen by mankind, both with abhorrence and with contempt.

It cannot be denied, that the climate of a country, its extent, its populousness, and the nature of its government and usages, may gradually form a peculiarity of morals and manners in peace, and of resource and energy in war ; but in reviewing the military achievements of the French, I cannot trace any effect, which did not naturally result from the mismanagement of others, co-operating with motives which no longer subsist, and supported by means which are ceasing to be practicable. At the same time it would be unjust to attribute to the national character of France a distinctive alacrity in crimes. It would be but a painful discussion, whether any other country possessing numerous inhabitants, vitiated by the corruptions of great and opulent cities, raised into fermentation by artful and

desperate men, and thrown abruptly from the restraints of absolute monarchy to all the licentiousness of anarchy, might not have fallen into similar excesses and similar calamities. I willingly believe that France is not in her natural state, but in a temporary delirium. I have insisted on this point, because the possibility, that a short time may produce great changes will merit attention; especially if it should be thought that I lay too much stress on the necessity of maintaining the war till we obtain the pacification which I shall describe.

§ 18. What turn the French insurrection may next be expected to take, what permanent form of government will at last be established, what relation it will hold with other nations, and to what extent the mischief may be carried, both on the continent and elsewhere, before general tranquillity and independence can be restored, are questions to which the mind looks with anxiety; but they are far beyond the reach of human foresight.

It frequently happens, that the result of political measures may be predicted by those

who are not engaged in them. When France took part in our American war, as the ally of a people in a state of insurrection, it was evident, notwithstanding Mr Necker's assertions to the contrary, that she was incurring not only a great debt, but an increased deficiency of revenue, from which he afterwards struggled so helplessly to recover her. When the army and navy of the monarchy were employed to fight the battles of a revolt founded in republican principles; when the ministers were permitted to indulge their vanity in tampering with innovations; when the spirit of reform among the people was excited by writers not discountenanced by the court; when the princes and nobles, under the idea of resembling Englishmen, wore the dresses of grooms, and confounded all appearances (which are always important to the reality) of rank and of inequality of condition; and when, at the same time, by their profligacy, futile manners, and irreligion, they were forfeiting all claim to respect; it was a severe lot which was falling upon the good and moral part of the nation; but it was impossible not to "distinguish the signs of the times."

In like manner, through the whole of the disputes with the parliaments, the reference to the two assemblies of notables, the invitation issued from Versailles to every individual in France to become a political adviser, and the entire formation and history of the constituent assembly, there was a regular and evident progression (announced and lamented by many) towards the confusions which took place, and which, in despite of the new constitution, still prevail; but the situation to which that country is now brought sets at defiance all speculation; the vessel, now rolling without mast or rudder upon the ocean of events, is too large for the strength, and skill, and guidance of men. Whether some fortunate tide may bring her unbroken into port, or whether some new storm may throw her piece-meal upon the shore, time can alone ascertain.

§ 19. Certain it is, that there will be farther and great changes, and, probably, with the same quickness of transition with which the same individuals, who still maintain the ascendancy, formed the several contradictory

constitutions of 1791, 1793, and 1795. France, having passed from an absolute monarchy, through the indefinable constitution of 1791; to a military democracy, has now adopted a form of mixed oligarchy, which at best can only be stated and considered as an attempt or step towards a better system; and having gone round the circle, may at last settle either in a limited monarchy, or in the despotism from which she started. But it is hardly possible that some settlement can much longer be deferred. It was said a few weeks ago by one of the leaders, that the people are almost as much in want of a government as of bread.

§ 20. It is not easy to ascertain, whether the general spirit of the latter acts of the Convention is to be attributed to popular influence; but certainly its moderation has been consonant to the corrected disposition of the people. Crowds of prisoners issued from dungeons; the prisons became less numerous and less full; public executions were discontinued: the nation seemed to view these acts with pleasure, and in consideration of them, to consent tacitly that their representatives should

throw the blame of the whole upon the name and memory of one individual.

§ 21. It is at least within possibility, that France may be thrown into separate States and Republics. Her extent, and the discordant opinions, manners, and usages of her different provinces, afford grounds for this speculation. In such an event, I should see with concern the fate of those, who, in the career of laudable lives, have been driven from their property; but I have long thought, that in other respects the change might be compatible with general tranquillity, and with the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous commerce among nations.

The only prediction, which may be made with confidence, is, that new struggles must still take place before the agitated country under our view can attain any practicable and settled government. She has dearly purchased her new constitution, and, perhaps, has not purchased with it any thing more than the certainty of farther troubles.

§ 22. I have not pursued this topic as sup-

posing that any form whatever of government eventually to be adopted by France for her own interior can now furnish a motive for prolonging the war against her, or even for declining to negotiate for peace, whenever the circumstances shall afford that reasonable hope of solidity and duration, which alone makes peace desirable. I can watch her revolutions without seeking to interfere in them, farther than as they appear to affect the safety of that separate portion of society in which I have duties to perform and interests to preserve: Still less am I laying the flattering unction to my mind, that there can exist in France any possible form of government, in which the jealousies and pretensions of two large and neighbouring maritime countries will not continue to supply frequent occasions of disagreement and hostility.

§ 23. It would be pardonable to have dwelt so long on the principles, temper, effects, and probable consequences of the French insurrection, if I had been merely carried forwards by a spirit of investigation, and a desire to pursue an eventful period of history, in which a few years have given the experience of

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whole centuries ; it is impossible not to feel a peculiar interest in the miseries of a people, of whom our ideas were so different in the gay and splendid days of their attachment to their late monarchy ; and surely, although there were imperfections and abuses in that monarchy, it was consistent with every improvement that can enliven and embellish society, with much individual happiness, and great national prosperity.

§ 24. But I have a greater and graver object in view. I must, however, make one previous remark respecting the actual disposition of surrounding nations to hold in disgust and abhorrence the principles of the French revolution. The continuance of so salutary an impression, or the promotion of it (if its existence should be questioned) must depend entirely on the manner in which the war may be closed. If France cannot be prevented from closing it on conditions which may hold her up as having accomplished the subjugation of other countries, and a permanent aggrandizement to her own comparative weight in the general scale of power, it will be in the

nature of man to estimate her principles by their final result, and the popular effervescence may recur with a rapidity beyond the power of language to describe. This whole consideration is deeply connected with the farther propositions which I shall now proceed to state.

The inferences to be deduced from the exhausted finances of France, from the decided inferiority of her naval strength, from the, as yet, unsettled position of her government, and from the moderated temper of her people, are all preparatory to the following question:—How far may it be consistent with wisdom for these kingdoms to seek or to accept any close of the war, unless it can be accomplished on terms, which, on balancing the relative state of power, shall restore and secure the safety and independence of Europe, and, above all, provide for the naval and commercial interests of these kingdoms?

In discussing that question, which occupies the thoughts of many, I shall say nothing of the campaign of the present year, nor of the farther operations which may be expected from our allies, or from the forces which are

now going to the West Indies: I put such discussions out of my view at present, and will merely remark on the object last adverted to, that it may contribute essentially to the means of closing the war with advantage.

I am content to argue, even on the hypothesis that our allies in the war are either conquered, or worn out, or withdrawn, or so circumstanced, that they afford no reasonable hope of farther aid or concurrence; that all prospect of success on the eastern or northern frontiers of France is lost; that our continental exertions (and expences) are or ought to be suspended; and that the several European Powers will either make a forced peace, maintain an interested neutrality, or pursue inefficient hostilities, according to their necessities, speculations, and faculties. On the other hand I assume, that England possesses a great naval superiority. I will farther suppose (without admitting it till we see the issue of the meeting of the new legislature) that France has now a Government capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity; and (which is more probable) that the French leaders are disposed to treat for peace.

In this predicament, feeling the pressure of the public expence ; feeling that the country is desirous of peace ; and considering the high price of the necessaries of life, to the general scarcity of which the war certainly contributes, though in a much less degree than is commonly supposed ; knowing also that there are certain bounds, beyond which our resources cannot be forced without danger ; I ask myself whether it is expedient to treat for peace, and on what general outline and stipulations it might be expedient to conclude a peace.

§ 25. To the first of those questions I answer, that it is the duty of those who conduct the war to treat for peace whenever negotiation can tend to any probable good. The system of the French government (whatever may become its particular form) is no longer likely to be an obstacle to negotiation ; besides, the modes are infinite by which two nations at war may sound each other's disposition without humiliation to either. The concluding is a very different consideration, to be decided only by a due estimate of the

conditions attainable, and of the consequences if those conditions should be rejected by us.

The extent of the French claims as the price of pacification is now known. If we are to suppose that their leaders will adhere to what they have professed in their late decrees, I cannot hesitate to say, that the preponderance, which our accession to those claims, or to any considerable part of them, must give to France, unless an adequate compensation in some other shape can be secured to us, would be dishonourable, and exhibit us to the present age and to posterity as submitting to have the law prescribed to us by our enemy. — And what law? The sacrifice of Powers that have been the most nearly connected with us; the direct or indirect annexation to France of all the ports of the continent from Dunkirk to Hamburgh; an immense cession of territory; and, in one word, the abandonment of the independence of Europe.

And yet we see and know that the people thus prescribing to us are without any established constitution; distracted by popular convulsions; in a state of irretrievable bankruptcy; without commerce, except in the expor-

tation of coin in return for provisions, ammunition, and naval stores ; with their principal ports blockaded ; and without a fleet that can venture to face one of our detached squadrons. Our prospects, if we have resources and firmness, are essentially better than they were twelve months ago ; and the disadvantages, if we give way, will be certain, immediate, and boundless.

It is true, that by giving way we might have some of the benefits of a temporary peace. The exhausted state of France might not permit her to avail herself immediately of her new advantages ; but the evident precariousness of our position would be such, that we must continue to maintain the preparations and expences of war. Unhappily it is the incorrigible policy of neighbouring states to lower and distress each other ; and it is impossible to convince mankind that their prosperity is best promoted and secured by the prosperity of all around them. When, however, a pacification takes place between two settled governments, an exhausting contest may be followed by an interval of unequivocal tranquillity ; and this has often been the case be-

tween England and France, though the intervals have been short ; but in the instance which I have hypothetically described, no such interval could be expected.

§ 26. On the whole view of our respective situations, and after making to France a full allowance for all her continental advantages, and considering at the same time our acquisitions and prospects, and the comparative state of circumstances, we are entitled to require, that the French armies shall be recalled within their old boundaries ; that Europe, in the general effect of arrangements, shall be replaced as nearly as may be on the same balance as before the war ; and particularly with respect to the naval and commercial interests of these kingdoms, that France shall not have obtained, in the result, any new means of preponderance. In order to arrive at such an adjustment, and particularly in the eventual discussions relative to possessions separated from the continent of Europe, much must depend on explanation, and on reasons of mutual and relative convenience.

§ 27. All the advantages of war are at present with England, considered as an insular naval power, and separated as she now stands from the rest of Europe ; separated not by any fault of her's, but by the fate of war, and by the fault of others.

As the war is at present circumstanced, its expence to us may be greatly contracted : England may gain much, and risks little ; she has the prospect of ruining still farther the reduced commerce and naval power of her rival.

But if the other countries, which have been overwhelmed by the torrent from which we have escaped, were to be left entirely to their fate, and if all the considerations of honour and territory were out of the question, it might still be doubted how far Great Britain could hope to stand alone as a rich and prosperous nation.

§ 28. It is not easy to draw inferences from the real or supposed interests of France ; all her activity has long tended to her own misery, and to the misery and alarm of other

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states. At the same time I cannot shut my eyes against this glaring truth, that the want of indispensable articles of subsistence and of money, and the whole pressure of her interior circumstances, may soon make a return to peace not only desirable, but necessary to her.

If the French leaders are sincere in trying to settle a constitution upon principles of mixed democracy and aristocracy, they cannot be ignorant that a large standing army is incompatible with such a constitution; and they well know, that the proposed aggrandizement can only be maintained by a large standing army. The experience of ages has shewn, that large armies, which always form a sort of separate state, yield a precarious obedience to popular authorities. How far the new constitution is maintainable either with or without a large army, is another consideration which at present I shall put aside. It was the established army which destroyed the monarchy; it has since been employed to overawe the democracy, and, perhaps, will at last prove fatal to the whole visionary speculation of an indivisible republic of thirty millions of inhabitants, extending from the Lower Meuse to

the Pyrenées, and from the Rhine to the Atlantic.

§ 29. It cannot be unknown to France, that any cession of the conquests in question must be extorted by a severe compulsion ; and that if any powers have, during the war, given way to her claims, it has been on the spur of a real or supposed necessity, or from some motive less calculated to inspire confidence. It may be an immorality in politics, but national cessions of importance are never made without a secret hope that some occasion may arrive for wresting them back again.

The French answer to these reasonings, that nature has pointed out the Alps, and the course of the Rhine and of the Lower Meuse, as the eastern and northern boundaries of the French empire : if by nature is meant Providence, (or, according to the last invocation adopted by the Convention, " The Genius " which presides over France,") there is neither religion, nor sense, nor modesty, nor morality in such a pretension ; it might with equal propriety be said, that nature has pointed out the Baltic and the borders of Siberia.

I will not make so harsh an insinuation, as that all the pacifications hitherto concluded by the different powers, which were engaged in the war, are false and hollow ; but any man who knows even the superficial interests of states, and who looks at the cessions of Maestricht, of Breda, of Helvoet, of Cleves, of the Spanish moiety of St. Domingo, of Rheinsberg, and of Mannheim, knows well that such cessions are either to be compensated by the effect of secret articles, or that they will be resumed whenever the resumption becomes practicable.

§ 30. It is evident, that some of the conquests of France, under the union which she proposes, would be sources to her, not of wealth, but of expence. It is in most cases improvident to appropriate what cannot be retained without an incessant exertion. Countries speaking a different language, attached to different customs, and influenced by jarring interests, may be governed by force ; but it will be an unsure subjection : it might even be doubted, whether the Polish partitions will

not ultimately recoil on the great powers concerned in them, and prove that they are as irreconcilable to political wisdom as they are to morality.

Will it be answered, that if these positions are true, they prove only that we ought not to object to France retaining her conquests, because the conquered countries will embarrass her, and probably rise against her? my reply is, that though it may be unwise on the part of our enemy to contend desperately for an equivocal advantage; on the other hand we ought not, in the position in which we are, to leave even doubtful a speculative aggrandizement of such extent; and to wait in an imperfect and expensive state of peace for casual advantages in the explosion of new troubles.

§ 31. In the conclusions to which I am tending, I assume that France is not to remain in a state of anarchy; and if she can obtain a practicable constitution, even for a limited period of time, she will be in a condition to re-establish the accustomed relations of peace and amity; she will at the same time acquire an

interest in those relations far beyond the importance of costly and offensive conquests. It is incumbent on her to advert to the repair of her finances, and to the pressure of those milliards of assignats, "which" (in the words of one of her committees) "have left nothing in the country but misery and paper." What is to become of those milliards, a few months more must decide. Some other means must be adopted. We may wait with decisive advantage to learn what those means may be, if in the interval we cannot attain just and honourable terms of pacification. It is farther indispensable for France to advert to the re-establishment of her agriculture, manufactures, and commerce; I may add, to repair her population; for I should not exaggerate if I were to assert that she has lost at least three millions of inhabitants by the effects of the insurrection and the war.

Above all, she will find in peace the only hope of emerging from that scarcity of sustenance, which (from whatever cause derived) keeps all her populous towns under the pressure or menace of a famine.

If the war continues, the dearth will extend itself even to the productive countries of the Palatinate, of the Austrian Netherlands, and also of Holland. We know that though Amsterdam was, by the effect of her position, the greatest corn market in Europe, the Dutch provinces did not produce a sufficiency even for their own consumption ; their intercourse with the Baltic, during the whole of this year, has been interrupted by the war, and will now be suspended by the winter.

§ 32. The consideration last alluded to is certainly become of serious moment to this kingdom also. It has been said, and the opinion goes forth, that the scarcity and high price of all the necessaries of life are in some measure caused by the war. Subject to certain explanations, this assertion may be true with respect both to Great Britain and to all Europe. With respect however to Great Britain, it is to be remarked that large bodies of our infantry and cavalry have, during a space of more than two years, been maintained upon the continent, and in a considerable degree by the produce of the continent ; nor

must we forget the aid derived from the numerous cargoes of provisions which have been seized in their passage to the French ports. In a general view, the dilapidations and waste of war are certainly great. The consumption made by men assembled in armies and in fleets is much more than the consumption occasioned by similar numbers in peaceful occupations. The waste which happens in great stores and magazines, and in ships of war and transports, the interruptions given to agriculture, the ravage and destruction of crops by the march and maintenance of large bodies of cavalry, are all in some degree operative causes of scarcity; but we are not to infer that those causes would be removed by a pacification. Unless the conditions of that pacification were such as to establish a real tranquillity and confidence among mankind, the evils resulting from military preparations, and naval equipments would be prolonged; and so far as this kingdom is separately affected by those evils, they would be increased by the facility opened to the hostile ports of Europe to receive cargoes, the importation of which may be directed to the aid of these kingdoms

and their dependencies whilst the war continues.

In truth, a principal cause of the present scarcity of bread-corn in Europe is to be found in the extraordinary and frequent recurrence of bad seasons in the last eight years: and though the present season has given an abundant produce of some kinds of grain, and of other articles of nourishment, and such as will remove all danger of famine, I am apprehensive, from the best enquiries and observation in my power, that the crops of wheat, collectively taken, will not amount to what is called by the farmers a medium crop.

It is well known, and has been ascertained, that, “ with the exception of barley only, “ this country, which in former times produced more grain than was necessary for “ its inhabitants, has, during the last twenty- “ five years, been under the necessity of depending on the produce of foreign countries for a part of its supply.” There is reason also to believe, “ that, in ordinary “ years, the produce of corn in Europe is not “ more than equal to the consumption of its

“ inhabitants.” When, therefore, wars and commotion, and their wasteful consequences prevail; when the seasons are bad; and farther, when the European competition for supplies from the harvests of North America becomes such as greatly to raise the prices, and even to create a demand beyond what that country can furnish, we cannot be surprised at the difficulty which has taken place. It is just matter of regret, and a perilous responsibility, whenever the executive government of a country feels itself obliged to undertake the details of procuring food for the people, and to supersede the merchants, whose energy, and competition, and capitals, are, in general cases, the best and surest vehicles of supply; but this interference of government was, perhaps, unavoidable in the present instance, when the necessities of France had raised the prices in the distant markets beyond what the agents of the merchants could venture to give; and it seems now to be indispensable, as any sudden revulsion in the actual channel of supply from foreign ports might operate as an entire interruption for many months.

The prices might be lowered, and the danger of meeting the next harvest with empty granaries might be averted, if the people could be induced for a limited period to use with the wheat a certain proportion of the other kinds of grain. This, however, is very difficult. In the mean time, I have not a doubt that the measures which have been taken have materially contributed to lessen the danger and pressure of the greatest calamity that can fall upon nations. I shall not enter farther into a subject which must soon come under the consideration of parliament; it is sufficient for my purpose to repeat, that the scarcity of subsistence is a motive which ought to operate forcibly with France towards producing peace; and that certainly it does not affect these kingdoms in the same point of view, nor in the same extent.

§ 33. In looking to the objects of preliminary negotiation, the attention is called to the distant scenes in the West-Indies, and to the manner in which those islands should hereafter be governed.

In the disastrous and baneful character of this war, it has been the policy of the French leaders to "generalize" (as they termed it) confusions among mankind, and to set afloat every country which they could not otherwise reduce or retain. This infernal principle has governed the whole of their measures relative to the islands. They began by extending their citizenship and fraternity to the people of colour; they next proclaimed a total abolition of slavery; abruptly, and without providing against the convulsions and general destruction of life and property, which so sudden a change was certain to create; they have since proceeded to arm the negro insurgents in a mass, and this was called "the simple operation of purifying the colonial system of the French islands, for the purpose of accomplishing the destruction of all the British colonies."

I do not mean to enter into certain questions which this recital suggests. In the opinions of some, the West India islands are the regions of injustice, cruelty, and mortality; the grave of Europeans, and the hell of Africans: in the opinion of others, there exists

neither a general unwholesomeness of the climate, nor cruelty in the condition and treatment of the slaves: whatever may be the truth in these opposite assertions, it must be submitted to the impression of time and of events.

So long, however, as we retain the valuable possessions alluded to, and in the system under which they are become an essential part of our prosperity, every consideration of regard to our commerce, of justice to numerous and respectable proprietors, of protection to the planters, and of humanity to the inhabitants and to the slaves themselves, should induce us to provide for their permanent tranquillity. With that view it is essential that the several powers of Europe should have some analogy in the interior systems of the several islands which they may respectively retain on closing the war: unless this can be accomplished, or unless we can acquire, keep, and resettle the islands, which the French principles have subverted and thrown into confusion, the fermentations to be communicated between the neighbouring colonies will be great, the disagreements will be incessant,

and causes even of national quarrels will arise from day to day.

§ 34. There are certain other points obviously important to be adverted to in any pacification: but I abstain from them as they are not of a nature to form insurmountable obstacles to peace, if the greater difficulties to which I have alluded can be removed.

§ 35. There is nothing in these remarks, which can be justly subject to the invidious charge of recommending and promoting war; I wish the blessings of peace to be as universally shared as the air which we breathe; but I know that both their reality and their permanence must depend on closing the war by conditions very different from those which are described in the French decrees of the 30th September.

§ 36. We have incurred the chief expences and inconveniences of war; we have completed arrangements of force, which, by the nature of our commerce and constitution, can never be attained without great delay and dif-

ficulty ; our military establishment is high and respectable ; our navy is carried to an improvement and pre-eminence in strength and skill, of which there is no example in our history ; we have prepared, and are sending to sea an expedition, from which it is reasonable to expect important effects : thus circumstanced it is surely wiser to prosecute the war, than to close it on conditions which would oblige us, either to continue the expence of war, or to expose ourselves to a sudden return of dangers and calamities, with the disadvantage of being unprepared for them. Let us have a peace, and not a temporary and short suspension of war ; let us have a peace, such as may make it consistent with prudence to disarm, and such as may afford a good ground of social security ; let it maintain the general balance of power among independent states ; let it exhibit to us France herself with a government (be it of what description it may) consistent, if possible, with her own quiet and prosperity, but at any rate consistent with the safety of other countries.

§ 37. It may be said, that the rigid prin-

ciples which France professes will not permit her to recede from the extended line of boundaries so recently decreed by her Convention after a solemn discussion. I will not attempt to conjecture the motives of so strange a measure ; but I know that it cannot have been more solemn than the repeated oaths and decrees of the constituent and legislative assemblies, never to make conquests. We have seen, in numerous instances, that the decrees of the Convention are not irrevocable ; it is unnecessary to carry the recollection farther back than to the treaty with the Royalists and Vendéans, which promised to them a large indemnity, and other conditions applicable only to independent powers ; and all this after repeated decrees never to treat with them, but to exterminate them.

§ 38. In treating of the termination of the war, humanity and justice suggest a wish that, whatever may be the modifications of territory and dominion, the principles of the *status quo ante bellum* might, by the returning justice and generosity of France, be extended to individuals and to families, who, in the course

of these troubles, have quitted their country ; but in stating this, I do not persuade myself, that such a measure would furnish, for any long period, new and efficient links of friendship on the part of France towards England.

§ 39. It is the nature and fate of most contests, that, though the provocations are multiplied by the events which take place, the passions and sense of resentment are lowered by the lapse of time ; and thus every war has its period, at which both parties begin to sigh for peace ; that moment is perhaps approaching ; but the difficulty of adjusting a pacification is at present very different from what it was in former wars. We must meet the difficulty ; and in the mean time we must moderate the inconsiderate eagerness of those, who, having reprobated the war from the first, without regard to its necessity, now call for an immediate peace, without regard to the attainable conditions or consequences ; on the other hand, we must not be hurried forward by the doctrines of those who think it essential to restore the French monarchy ; we must

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promote that sort of spirit, which is equally distant from an undue impatience for peace, and from an obstinate perseverance in pretensions not to be maintained.

§ 40. It is a weak argument, but it will be said, that we ought to make peace, because several powers of the late coalition have made it, and because others may, perhaps, be expected to withdraw themselves in like manner from the war, and upon grounds and stipulations, which abandon and renounce all the objects of our contest. It often happens that these great coalitions, even when formed and supported by the most honourable sense of public expediency, fail to produce, in counsel or in action, all the effect that was expected from them ; and with respect to the powers alluded to, I must repeat, that their dispositions and views are not to be inferred from the treaties which they have signed : some of those treaties contain the seeds of future hostilities ; others of them imply nothing more than a truce, or temporary repose from war ; at the utmost, they are the partial pacifications of separate princes, and in no degree

embrace those principles of general policy, to which it is essential for us to advert, if we mean to restore peace, or even the semblance of peace, to Europe.

§ 41. I see with deep concern the ravages which Europe has suffered, and the dangers which still prevail ; there is, however, nothing radically discouraging in our position ; if there were, a want of firmness would tend to make that position worse than it is : the whole closes in this single point ; “ the expediency of bearing and risking something more for the hope, prospect, and essential purpose of restoring general peace on secure and permanent grounds.”

I have attempted to argue, that such a close of the war is for the advantage even of France ; but if it were not, I contend that it is better for her to make peace in the manner described, than to continue the war. If, however, she should not accede to either of these opinions, I insist that it is incumbent on this country, and essential to her safety, and perhaps to her existence, to maintain the struggle. I conceive that she may maintain it with

a diminished expence, with little hazard of detriment, and with a prospect, at no distant period, of resulting and compensating advantages. In this persuasion, and in the confidence that we have the fortitude and the means to encounter the difficulties which surround us, I feel a pride and satisfaction in thinking that England, by maintaining with firmness principles of sound policy, will stand successfully the bulwark of nations, of social order, of rational liberty, and of religion.

§ 42. The rapidity of these remarks and inferences may have led me to use expressions, which on revision I may wish to modify and correct; I may also have fallen into repetitions amidst the complicated and recurring objects of such an inquiry; I trust, however, that the impression of what I have urged will be taken from the whole, and not from detached passages.

It is possible that some unforeseen vicissitude may overset the entire fabric of my speculations, or even that, in the eventful course of the French agitations, the whole consideration may be varied whilst I am writing these

pages. The rise or fall of an individual will alone sometimes change all the views and principles of political negotiations and of states. Still, however, such of my positions as are founded in truth will remain unshaken, and will be more or less applicable to the new objects of policy, expediency, or necessity, which may present themselves. In the mean time, it is better to reason from what exists, than from endless conjectures as to what may happen.

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